

U.S. PLAN ANTI-BUG RAY

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in Washington

AMERICA in considering the use of microwaves to jam "cavesdropping" equipment in Russian missions in the United States in retaliation for the continued bombardment of its own embassy in Moscow:

A team of experts in Washington is studying a number of ways of using microwaves or infra-red rays against the Russian embassy or other Soviet buildings, together with their technical, legal and political implications.

It is thought that the Government will probably stop short of deciding to use them as it has already denounced such actions as risky to health, because of the possibility that the Russian would hit back and that too many details of American and Russian "cavesdropping" activities might be made public.

One proposal, for a 15-foot cathode ray tube to be mounted opposite the Embassy in Washington to disrupt its communications, may also have to be ruled out because of its likely effects on television reception in the area.

Ford appeal

The American Government has been pressing the Russians to stop beaming microwaves at its Embassy in Moscow since the level was suddenly stepped up in the middle of last year.

Despite a personal appeal to Mr Brezhnev from President Ford for an end to the practice, the Russians have done no more than use their equipment more selectively and for shorter periods.

In the meantime Mr Walter Stoessel, the American Ambassador, has been transferred to Bonn after speculation that a deterioration in his health had been caused by radiation from the microwaves. Embassy staff have also become concerned that they may be at risk.

Aluminium screens erected by the Americans have shut out 90 per cent. of the microwaves, but the level is still noticeable enough to cause concern in Washington.

There have been few public statements recently on the radiation from Government officials, partly because of fears that failure to act before now might become an election issue, with President Ford already on the defensive over "weakness" toward Russia.

But a number of ways of retaliating are under consideration. Apart from the idea of the cathode ray tube and other means for sabotaging the Russian "cavesdropping" effort are being looked at, one is a proposal to beam in infra-red rays which would make particular items of furniture and equipment hot to the touch.